THANKSGIVING
(AND OTHER)
RHYMES

EUGENE BROWN

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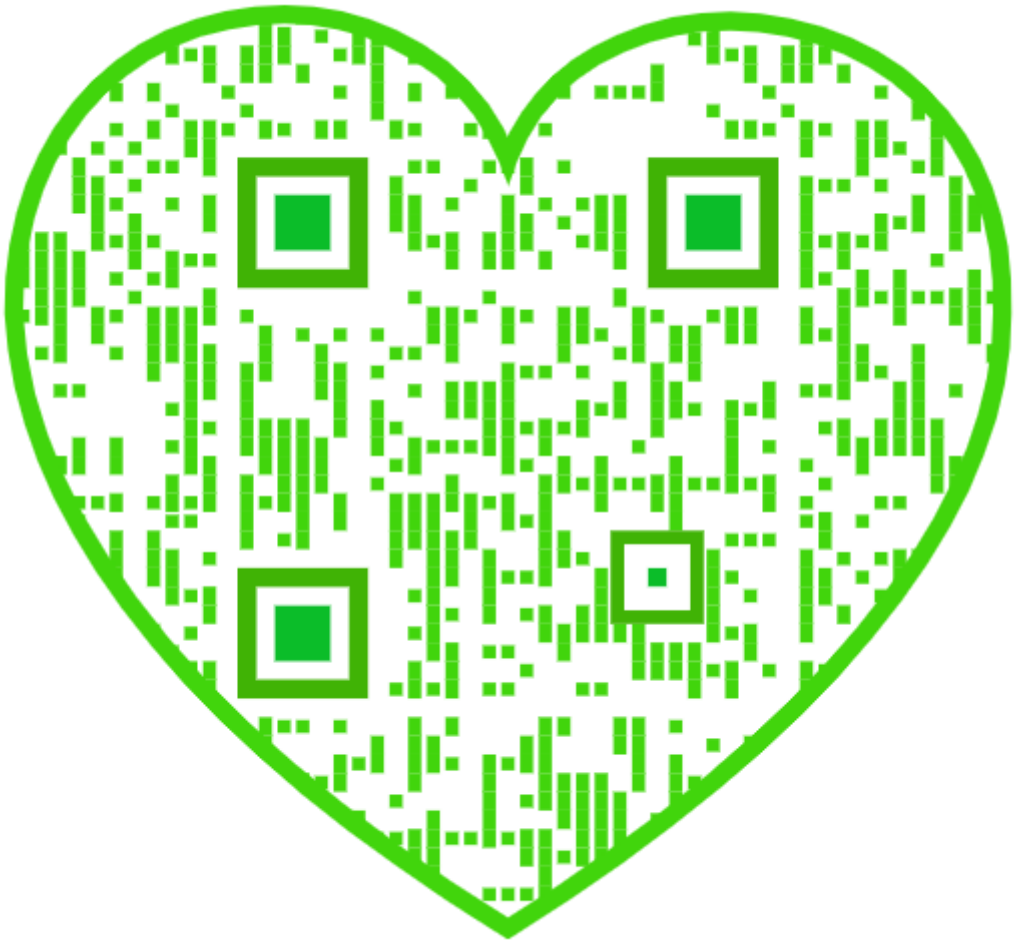

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EUGENE BROWN

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Preface.

In presenting this book, the author desires to ward off all adverse criticism by stating that the work is not published for pecuniary profit, but simply to fulfill a long felt ambition on the part of the author, and the contents of the book are not designed to show his actual possibilities, but he merely submits the work with the hope that some time or other some part of it or other will cause a pleasant moment in the life of some person or other, and should this hope be realized, then the end to which the lines were written shall have been fully accomplished.

When it comes to rhymes, few is plenty. The author could write an hundred more like these, and some perhaps much better, if he wanted to, "only he doesn't want to".

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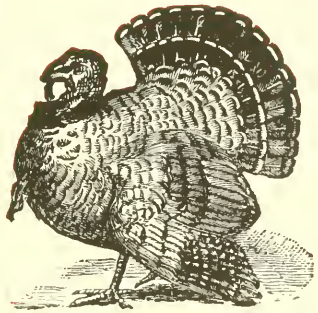
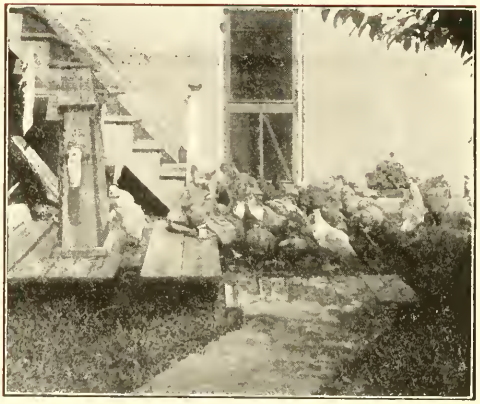


"When the ripened stalk's been standin'."

The Best Thanksgiving.

(The story is of an old middle-state hoosier, who is trying to tell how much finer the Thanksgiving of forty years ago was than that of today, but he is at last obliged to acknowledge the "corn" and admit that it was his age and keener senses at that time which made the old-fashioned holiday seem so much nicer, and he finally winds up with a full confession of his love for a dear little girl.)

When the ripened stalk's been standin' 'bout a week,
er two, er three,
An' the single leaf is clingin' to the Slipp'ry "El-
lum" tree;
When the briars seem to shiver as they try to grasp
yer hand,
An' the well known Autumn Sadness is abroad upon
the land;
When the Hick'ry-nuts an' acorns cease to rattle on
th' ground,
An' the ever wary chipmunk has his eye peeled fer
the hound;
When the Butter-nuts are gathered, an' the juicy big
paw-paw,
An' we're done a huskin' pumpkins, an' the Tur-
key's in the straw;
When the winds of early Winter seem to have a cer-
tain howl,
An' their most unpleasant zephyr roughs the feathers
on the owl;
When the chickens, scentin' Winter, hover 'round the
kitchen door,



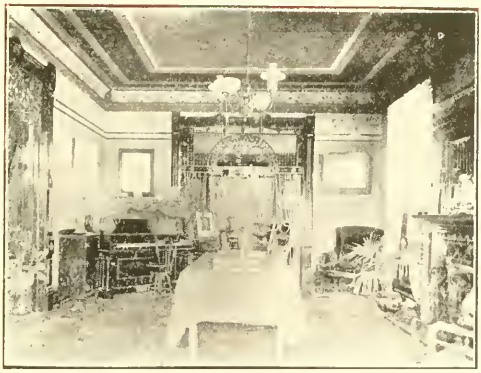
"When the chickens . . . hover 'round the kitchen door."

An' the house-wife throws a bit of old red carpet on the floor,
Jest to keep the wind from slidin' through the door's old worn out sill,
'Cause it came in bad last Winter, and she knows it surely will;
When the kitchen floor's finer than the greenest grassy plot,
An' the boots are in the oven, jest to get 'em good an' hot;
When the mince and Pumpkin pies have all been stacked away to keep,
An' we've buried all the cabbage, an' potatoes by the heap;
Then the big long rows o' jelly, an' the jam that aint been tried,
An' the turnips and the sweet potates in bins along the side;
When we had our own good eatin', an' we made it all ourself,
An' the old Thanksgiving dinner from the pit an' from the shelf
Was a heap an' shoutin' better than the Turk you're havin' now,
Shipped at least a mile, or forty—maybe brought up with a cow;
But you bet we had a dinner, don't you never need to fear.
My! but wa'n't it quite excitin' when we rounded up a deer?
No such eatin' now, you bet you, not a half the fun today.
Think you wouldn't like to been there? Ask the folks that's old an' gray

Sittin' all around about ye, if ye don't believe 'twas fine
When we topped the whole good feelin' with a glass o' Mother's wine.
Tell ye, boys, there aint the gladness—though it's fine, an' so an' so,—
That there was in old Thanksgivin' 'way back forty year ago.
Tell ye, boys, it lacks the stuffin',—lacks the labor in the goods—
Lacks the home-made air an' flavor—lacks the huntin' in the woods.
But I reckon, though, you're better I'm a bit behind the race,
But I can't enjoy the rattle an' the style around the place.
Awful hard fer me to swaller; it aint picturesque no more.
But I reckon, after all, there's fewer wolves aroun' the door,
An' they tell me Uncle Sammy's goin' to give us lots to do,
An' I reckon if we hunt it, it'll come to me an' you,
An' I guess that after all it wa'n't so good so long ago;
But, instead, I kind o' think—well, I was younger then, ye know;
Love was young then, too, I tell you. Had the sweetest little gal,
An' to make this story jingle, haf to tell ye, it was Sal.
When I took her out of evenin's to the school to learn to sing,
Hardly clothes enough to hide me, she a clingin' to my wing,

"The big, long rows of jelly."

Care a durn about the weather, er the work we had
to do;
It was love that we was thinkin', love that's old an'
tried and true.
That's what makes me think 'twas finer, when of
course it wasn't, though,
An' I kind o' like to tell about the "used to be" ye
know.
Neighbors! Neighbors then, I tell ye, everybody in
the set.
I remember how we borried from each other, even
yet.
How we traded, one with t'other, wa'n't no money
question then;
It was brother, friend an' brother, an' it never'll be
again.
But we still kin love the harder, if we only jest will
try,
As we sit around the table, eatin' Mother's home
made pie.
An' ferget about th' neighbors, an' th' feller that was
mean,
Jest by keepin' close together, with a conscience good
an' clean.
Jest a peggin' on ferever, with the love an' with the
sweat,
If we jest kin pull t'gether, why, we'll git there,
maybe, yet.



"The style around the place."

"In to stay."

In To Stay.

As I sit by the grate, and I muse along,
While the wet log seems to be hummin' a song,
And the blazes flicker and die away—
My feet up high, 'cause I'm "in to stay";
As the light goes out an' I'm there alone—
That is, save the cat on the white hearth stone—
There's a feelin' comes that I can't control,
And it seems to capture my very soul.
Outside the house the stars are bright,
And 'spite of the cold, it's an elegant night,
Jest such a sort of a night you'd like
Made for a sleighride over the pike.
But here I am, an' I can't be there,
So I settle further into my chair,
An' my gaze moves 'round to familiar traps;
The old cat stretches herself an' gapes.
Why, you couldn't buy my seat b' that grate,
Not if you'd give me the whole durned state.
I'm in this evenin', and in to stay,
An' a team of mules couldn't get me away.
I chuck on another good stick o' wood—
The fire brightens an' feels so good,
Then dies again to that ruddy glow
That looks so cheerful like, don't ye know.
Why, you couldn't pull me away, I say,
Not with your team, the grey an' th' bay.
An' I doubt if addin' the other two
You could pull my frame from the dear old flue,
'Cause I'm feelin' sort o' jest this way:
I'm fixed jest right, an' I'm "in to stay".

"Our own good eatin'."

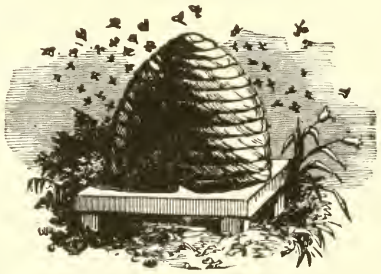
The Old Man's Memory.

I was talkin' to neighbor Jones today,
While we was pitchin' that load o' hay,
An' he was a sayin' he never heered tell
Of such a terrible long dry spell
As this here weather we're havin' now.
"Why," 's'I, "I'll put this hay in th' mow
If I haint a better mem'ry'n that
Under my old last Summer's hat".

"While we was pitchin' that load o' hay."

W'y, M'ria, you recollect right well
The time when we hed that long dry spell
Th' year o' the frost ev'ry month but June,
An' we set up to watch the eclipse o' th' moon.

Recollect? 'Twas the summer I bought old Dick,
An' we cleared th' forty jest north o' th' crick.
W'y, pshaw, 'long side o' that we're fine.
I'll tell ye the year—it was fifty-nine.
Remember? Old Weatherby died that year,
An' they fetched him home an' buried him here,
An' they opened th' church an' held high Mass,
An' th' sun was so hot that it cracked th' glass
In the old feller's coffin, don't ye mind?
An' all o' th' crops got away behind?
An' we came near losin' our home an' all,
An' it didn't rain till away in th' Fall?
W'y, 'course you remember, an' so do I,
An' didn't the shoats an' th' pullets die?
An' th' dust got so deep it was jest like snow,
An' we sprinkled aroun' th' well, I know!
An' then fer old Jones to stand up an' say
That he'd never seen it in all his day.
W'y if I would forget like that man does
I couldn't tell bees when I heered 'em buzz.



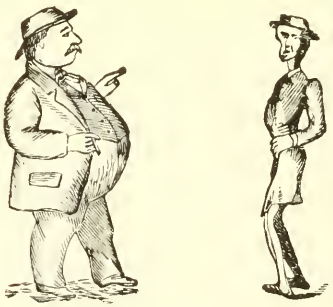
I remember it jest as well's kin be—
The summer that Mary was goin' on three,

Th' summer that Jim fell an' bu'sted a rib,
An' nary a smitchin o' corn in th' crib.
You bet I remember! I'm goin' back now,
An' offer to put Jones' hay in th' mow
Unless I kin prove that my mem'ry's right.
Jim, where is my hat? I'll be home 'bout night.

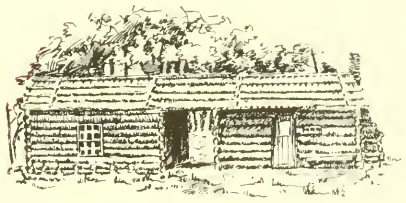
Origin of Thanksgiving.

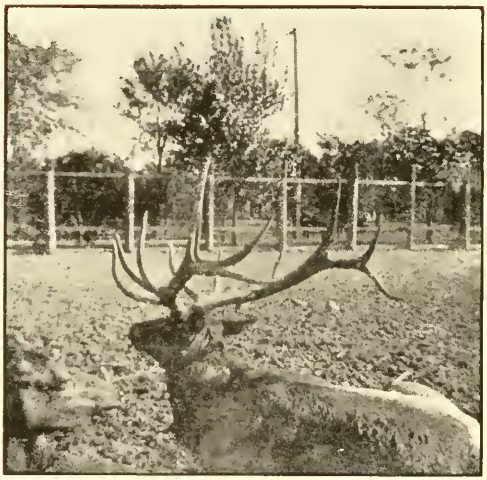
When those old friends of Plymouth stock
  Had scraped a bare existence here,
Had cleared some land and reared a flock
  Around their homes well earned and dear;
Had raised a crop of things to eat
  And stacked their Winter store away,
They vowed to have a wholesome treat,
  And thus commenced Thanksgiving Day.

Each year it grew, this general spread,
  Spurred on at times, as Pumpkin pie,
And fruit and cake and ginger bread
  Came on to make the living high.
And naught was spared to make this feast
  A royal time for one and all,
And scoffed was he who ate the least,
  Though thin, or stout, or short, or tall.



And as the nation lived and grew
  And colonies and states were made,
The custom then was born anew,
  And thus it lived, and grew, and stayed.
It now is bound to live for aye
  As part of this, a self made land.
Our noble chief appoints the day,
  And we give thanks on every hand.





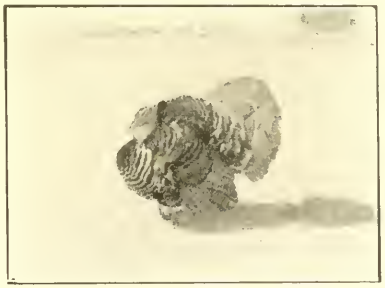
"No such eatin' now."

At Three Score and Two.

(These verses were written for my father's 62nd birthday celebration, and I sat still with them in my pocket until the celebration was over, because of my modesty. I have since become more careless, and they are now printed in all their sublimity.)

At three score years and two, and yet so spry,
Would think 'twere only thirty, maybe less;
And having still the keenest ear and eye,
Would seem to me a tub of happiness.

These things alone, I think, without the rest,
Would quite suffice to make him feel quite gay,
But when with two good legs and arms he's blest,
Most any man would welcome this great day.

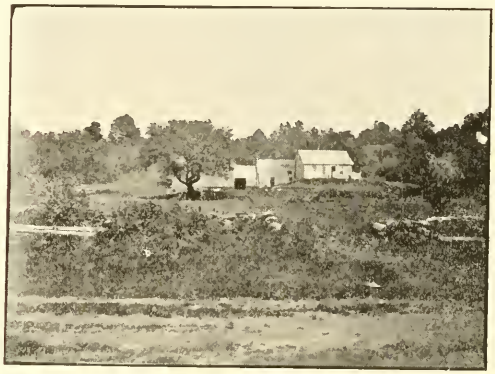


"The Turk."

In checking up life's book, he turns along
Until the new page numbers "Sixty-two".
It seems to me with mind and body strong,
The fun of life is just begun anew.

No record now to make, or path to choose,
No wish, except to have a right good time;
No fear of putting in to win or lose,
Like man will do when only in his prime.

It seems that Sixty-two is just the place
When one who reaches there as well as he
Can safely rest and say, "I've won the race;
I'll sit me down 'neath life's big shady tree."



"And when I see a chance to make a stake,
Without the chance of loss, or fear or care,
I'll take it, with my right hand on the brake,
And give my orders from an easy chair."

A time like this I'd call the cake of life,
And naught but fun, as mentioned heretofore,
To visit with a loving help-mate wife,
Where business cannot find him any more.

Pictures of Illinois.

Carry me back to the good old home,
Back where the plow turns the rich black loam;
Over the bridge at th' turn o' th' road,
Up on th' hill where th' Sumach growed.
Back where the leaves are all aglow,
Just as th' Autumn sun is low.
Back where the Wahoo grows so high,
There in the vale, where th' crick runs dry.

There where th' first mud pies were made,
Back where we little ones always played.
Back to the hills and th' dales so grand,
Back to th' dear old "Sucker" land.
Over th' wheat fields, up an' down,
Out o' th' noise and dust in town.
Thro' th' big woods to th' Walnut trees,
Swaying up high in th' Autumn breeze.
There you can find me in heart, sir, still.
Just as I love them, I always will.

Where and What I've Et.

(For a Thanksgiving toast at the Brown House, 1902.)

I have et in lofty gables
And I've et beneath the trees,
From the humblest veg-e-tables
To the swell imported cheese.
I have et in SanFrancisco
And I've et in New Orleans,
I have et the famed Nabisco
And the Heinz's Pork & Beans.
I have et from cut glass dishes,
And from wooden plates as well.

I have et the ocean fishes,
Which were surely mighty swell.
I have eaten clammy chowder,
And the oyster from the shell.
I have et complexion powder,
Which I hadn't better tell.
I have skimmed the skum of juices
From the California fruit.
I have et in train cabooses
And the dining car to boot.

I have et in three-cent flunkies.
Where the cook is never in.
I have even et with monkeys,
Or they might as well have been.
I have et of biscuits shredded
And of some just made to keep.
I have et veal cutlets, breaded,
That would grace the garbage heap.
I have et bologna ringers
And the famous wiener wurst;
They were surely old hum-dingers,
And you had to see them first.
I have even et in gutters,
With the table on a box.
I have et all sorts of butters,
Some as strong as Streator's ox.
I have et the Macaroni
And the milk that's made of chalk.
I have tasted codfish bony
That was loud enough to talk.
I have et the perfumed onions
In a greasy little fry;
They will penetrate your bunions
And the taste will never die.

But my heart is kind o' swellin'
  And I guess I might as well
Settle down and get to tellin'
  What I started out to tell.
So there aint no need to worry,
  Just keep sittin' on your chair,
'Cause I'll tell it in a hurry,
  And I'll tell it on the square.
It will only take a minute,
  And I'll tell it good and loud.
I am not ashamed what's in it,
  So I'll tell the whole durned crowd.
Now get ready, folks, to hear it,
  Bend your ears out toward your nose—
Now I think I feel the spirit—
  Yes, I know it—here she goes:
When it comes right down to cookin',
  Mother Brown does touch the spot;
She is mighty blamed good lookin',
  And she skins the whole durned lot.

"Streator's Ox."

"The huntin' in the woods."

An Illinois Rain-Storm.

It was jest along towards evenin', an' the day'd been
hot an' dry;
Not a rain since Decoration—not a ripple in th' sky.
Till this day in airly August, looked an awful lot
like rain,
An' th' breeze struck up that evenin' waved the corn
stalks an' th' grain.
All along the broad horizon thunder heads begun to
show,
An' th' clouds *all* looked like funnels, an' th' wind
begun to blow.
Looked a good deal like a cyclone. It was rain we
all could tell,
'Cause the air was so refreshin', an' it had that
rainy smell.
Then we heered th' distant thunder, comin' louder
every time;
Hadn't heered that fer a quarter—sounded sweet as
any chime.
Then agin th' Western sunlight you could see the rain
beat down,
An' th' neighbors said they heered it when it crossed
th' nearest town.
All th' time it thundered louder, gettin' blacker all
around.
What a blessin' was a comin'; it would moisten up
th' ground,
Lay th' dust an' help th' farmers, fill th' cisterns,
all gone dry,

So we all sat out to watch it, as the clouds was rushin' by.
Then we thought we felt a sprinkle. If it rained we wouldn't run,
'Cause we wanted rain so badly, gettin' wet would jest be fun.
Then the ducks begun to chuckle an' we knew th' rain was near,
An' the thunder, like a battle, seemed to pierce from ear to ear.
But the storm kept on a comin', we a settin' out there still
'Till the West begun to brighten where the storm had seemed to spill;
Then th' thunder ceased to rattle—an' th' night begun to fall—
All our own imagination—'cause it didn't rain, at all.

Jim Taylor's Thanksgiving.

Jimmie Taylor—just an orphan, left to go the world alone,
Just a reckless sort o' stroller, not a soul to call his own;
But they took him in at Taylor's, 'cause he didn't seem so bad,
An' they brush'd him up an' kept him, an' it made his heart feel glad.

All the summer long he labored with the others
'round the place;
When they went to look the cows up he was always
in the chase.
He was just a buxum hunter, never failed to find the
game,
And no matter how they scolded, Jim was always
just the same.
Always stirrin' at the daybreak, always last to bed
at night;
When the boys would get in trouble, he was always
there to fight.
Didn't care a cent fer money—hardly ever left the
place,
An' no matter when you went there, you would see
his pleasant face,
Makin' friends with all the strangers, like the ones
he knew the best,
Sittin' on the kitchen door-sill, just as happy as the
rest.
'Twas the mornin' of Thanksgivin', an' it happened
I was there;
Mrs. Taylor cookin' turkey, good things steamin'
everywhere.
Jim was sittin' there a thinkin', sayin' not a single
word;
He had never seen Thanksgivin', but from what he
seen and heard
He could tell that some uncommon thing was hap-
penin' that day,
But poor Jim, somehow or other, didn't have a word
to say.
Not a soul had thought to tell him anything about the
fun,
Or the turkey he'd be eatin', just as soon as it was
done;

So he just was sittin' thinkin' as the folks went to
an' fro,
May be he was losin' favor, sort o' out o' place, you
know.
So he moped around until he couldn't stand it any
more;
Then he stole in by the fire-place, an' laid down on
the floor.
All the time the folks was busy gettin' dinner fer the
crowd,
An' the young folks seemed so happy, an' they
laughed an' joked so loud;
Not a soul had missed poor Jimmie, an' he soon
dropped off to sleep
By the big red open fire, in a cozy little heap.
An' at last we sat at Dinner, an' the glee was at its
height,
But they'd left out orphan Jimmie, an' I didn't feel
just right;
But I thought of course they knew it, an' it wa'n't
my place to say,
But I thought of Jim, so faithful, now to miss Thanks-
givin' Day—

'Cause the dinner was the makin' of Thanksgivin' Day to me—
An' to think of Jim a sleepin', kind o' spoilt the thing, you see.
Didn't seem to me like human, yet I kept the secret still
'Till they all had finished eatin', an' I, too, had got my fill;
Then I mustered up the courage 'nough to mention Orphan Jim,
An' they all with merry laughter, said, "We hadn't thought of him".
But we went an' found poor Jimmie, an' we gave him what was left,
An' he ate it with a relish, not like one of friends bereft,
An' he didn't seem to think we'd slighted him a single bit,
But he just kept on a eatin', like he wouldn't ever quit,
An' it did more good fer me to see him stow the grub away
Than I ever had in eatin' any old Thanksgivin' Day.
So the story now is ended, Jim got all that he could eat
Of the good Thanksgivin' gravy an' the splendid turkey meat,
But I couldn't quite get over thinkin' how they slighted him.
It was Taylor's big pet Bull-dog. There's the secret, that was Jim.

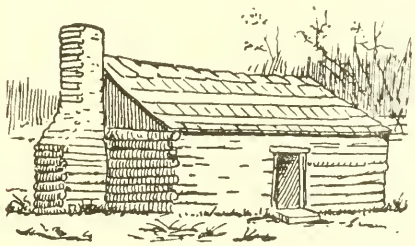
"Jimmie Taylor."

L. of C.

My "Buckeye" Home.

(These verses were written to be published in the form of a popular song, about the time of the "State song" craze. The actual time consumed in writing and correcting was fourteen minutes.)

There's a treasure in my mem'ry that will always
have a place
In recollections of the days gone by;
'Tis my home in broad Ohio, as it stood in stately
grace,
And a thought of home and Mother brings a sigh.
The pictures of my boyhood stand before me bright
as day—
Methinks I see my Father as of yore,
And my boyish friends and playmates, in the games
we used to play,
As we gathered 'round the little cottage door.

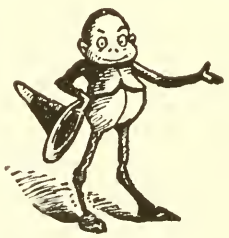


"As it stood in stately grace."

Just a passing mem'ry of the dear old "Buckeye"
land,
Just a mental picture of the hills and dales so grand,
'Tis a grand companion, as in sadness now I roam.
Just to see Ohio, and my dear old "Buckeye" home.

There's another fond remembrance of the place I long
to see,
'Tis a girl I met and learned to love so well;
'Twas a pretty maid of just eighteen, and true as she
she could be,
And I long to see her now, my love to tell.
The sun shines bright for me at home, a welcome al-
ways there;
Perhaps some day I'll wander as before,
In the pathways of my childhood, with my sweet-
heart, fond and fair,
For I love the dear old "Buckeye" more and more.

Just a passing mem'ry of the dear old "Buckeye"
land,
Just a mental picture of the hills and dales so grand,
'Tis a grand companion, as in sadness now I roam.
Just to see Ohio, and my dear old "Buckeye" home.



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